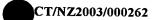
## **WHAT WE CLAIM IS:**

- 1. Query response software which is adapted to execute the steps of:
  - (i) receiving query information and identity information from the user, and
  - (ii) searching for information identified by said query information and retrieving said information, and
  - (iii) delivering the retrieved information to said user, and
  - (iv) determining whether the delivered information can successfully be employed by the user to answer their query, and
  - contacting a specialist advisor if the user is unlikely to successfully employ the information delivered to answer their query.
- Query response software which is adapted to execute the steps of:
  - (i) receiving query information and identity information from a user, and
  - (ii) searching for information identified by said query information and retrieving said information, and
  - (iii) delivering the retrieved information to said user, and
  - (iv) determining a query complexity threshold for the query information received and
  - (v) determining a user complexity threshold for the identity information received, and
  - (vi) determining whether the query complexity threshold exceeds the user complexity threshold, and





- (vii) contacting a specialist advisor if the query complexity threshold exceeds the user complexity threshold.
- Query response software as claimed in any previous claim wherein the specialist advisor contacted is supplied with the user's identity information and query information.
- Query response software as claimed in any previous claim wherein the user is alerted to the specialist advisor being contacted.
- Query response software as claimed in any previous claim which uses an internet based user interface and internet based transmission protocols to communicate with a user.
- 6. Query response software as claimed in any previous claim wherein registered users only can access the query response software.
- 7. Query response software as claimed in any previous claim wherein identity information includes a user name and a password.
- 8. Query response software as claimed in any previous claim wherein query information details a specific question or problem.
- Query response software as claimed in claim 8, wherein query information is used to retrieve information which can be used to solve a user's query.
- Query response software as claimed in any previous claim wherein electronic format information is retrieved.
- 11. Query response software as claimed in claim 10, wherein electronic format information is retrieved from at least one remote electronic database.





- 12. Query response software as claimed in claim 10, wherein electronic format information is retrieved from a local cache.
- Query response software as claimed in any previous claim wherein the information retrieved is filtered prior to being delivered to the user.
- 14. Query response software as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 13, wherein a complexity threshold is formed by information which can be ranked.
- 15. Query response software as claimed in claim 14, wherein a complexity threshold is formed by a numerical value.
- 16. Query response software as claimed in claim 14, wherein a query complexity threshold indicates the degree of complexity of a user's query.
- 17. Query response software as claimed in claim 14, wherein a user complexity threshold indicates the user's ability to successfully use retrieved information.
- 18. Query response software as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 17, wherein user modelling is employed to determine a user complexity threshold.
- 19. A method of providing a response to a query which includes the steps of:
  - (i) receiving query information and identity information from the user, and
  - (ii) searching for information identified by said query information and retrieving said information, and
  - (iii) delivering the retrieved information to said user, and
  - (iv) determining whether the delivered information can successfully be employed by the user to answer their query, and





- contacting a specialist advisor if the user is unlikely to successfully employ the information delivered to answer their query.
- 20. A method of providing a response to a query as claimed in claim 19, wherein the specialist advisor is supplied with the user's identity information and query information.
- 21. A method of information retrieved adapted to execute the steps of:
  - (i) receiving requirements information and identity information from a user, and
  - (ii) searching for information identified by said requirements information and retrieving said information, and
  - (iii) delivering the retrieved information to the user identified by the received identity information, and
  - (iv) determining whether the delivered information will meet the requirements set out in the requirements information, and
  - (v) contacting a specialist advisor if the information delivered is unlikely to meet the user's requirements.
- 22. A method of information retrieval as claimed in claim 21 wherein the specialist advisor is supplied with the user's identity information and requirements information.
- 23. A method of information retrieval as claimed in any one of claims 21 or 22 wherein the requirements information received consists of key words and/or phrases.



- 24. Query response software substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated by the accompanying drawings and/or examples.
- 25. A method of providing a response to a query substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated by the accompanying drawings and/or examples.
- 26. A method of information retrieval substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated by the accompanying drawings and/or examples.